



EASI PERFORMANCE IN 2019-2020

Executive summary of the EaSI Performance
Monitoring Report 2019-2020

Written by PPMI
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EaSI PERFORMANCE IN 2019-2020

Executive summary of the EaSI Performance Monitoring Report 2019-2020

The European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) provides financial support to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guarantee adequate and decent social protection, combat social exclusion and poverty, and improve working conditions across the EU.

The EaSI Programme is managed directly by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. It is structured along three axes:

- The **Progress** axis focuses on providing support to the policymaking and implementation process through the production of policy evidence, organisation of information sharing and mutual learning activities, funding social policy experimentation projects and providing capacity building support to EU-wide and national organisations.
- The **EURES** axis aims to improve geographical labour mobility in the EU by making information on placements more transparent and accessible as well as funding support services for jobseekers and employers.
- The **Microfinance and social entrepreneurship** (MF/SE) axis aims to improve access to, and the availability of, finance for vulnerable people, micro- and social enterprises, by providing funding for financial intermediaries and capacity building of relevant actors. The financial instruments are implemented indirectly through the European Investment Fund (EIF).

This executive summary presents the key takeaways from the fourth EaSI monitoring report covering the years 2019 and 2020. The report provides figures for financial implementation in 2019 and 2020 and an overview of the achievements of the EaSI Programme per each axis and thematic area. In addition, the report incorporates the views of relevant stakeholders on the EaSI operations in 2019 and 2020, which were gathered through the large-scale EaSI stakeholders' survey and survey of participants in EaSI-supported events.

FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION

According to the EaSI legal basis¹, the following indicative percentages apply throughout the whole period of 2014-2020:

- At least 55 % to the Progress axis;
- At least 18 % to the EURES axis;
- At least 18 % to the Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis.

As shown in Table 1, the commitments made under all three axes were well in line with the indicative percentages foreseen in the EaSI legal basis.

¹ The final indicative percentages of funding to be spent per each axis of the programme have been defined by the Omnibus Regulation of 2018, which amended the original EaSI Regulation. This was done to ensure that the Programme swiftly provides adequate resources to support changing political priorities, improve its management and allow focusing of budgetary resources on actions that produce the best possible employment and social results. See: Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

Table 1. EaSI total commitments per axis (2014-2020) (€)

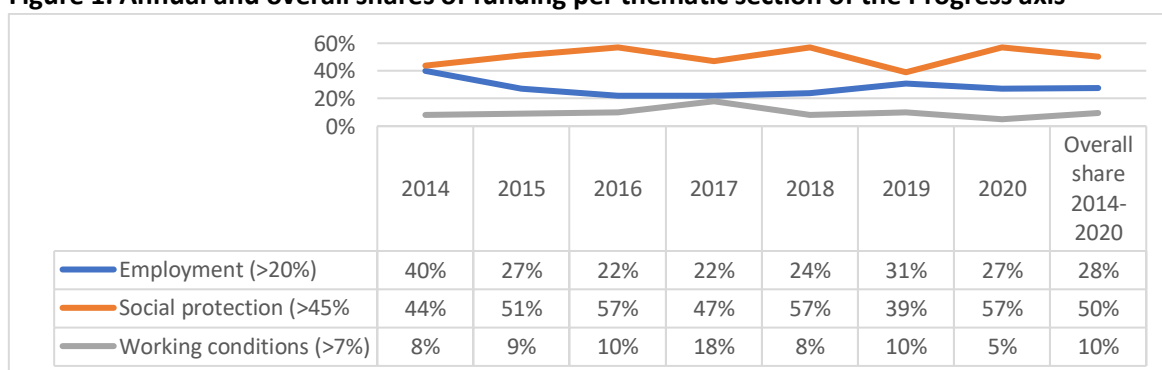
Total commitments per year	PROGRESS	EURES	Microfinance/Social Entrepreneurship	EaSI administrative	Overall
2014	65 278 249.91	21 439 000.00	28 500 200.00	3 549 908.34	118 767 358.25
2015	71 836 540.60	23 024 481.86	31 427 570.00	3 537 533.76	129 826 126.22
2016	71 500 435.22	22 865 150.32	27 744 070.32	3 621 471.00	125 731 126.86
2017	65 315 596.64	25 128 868.00	43 497 384.00	3 454 699.44	137 396 548.08
2018	71 415 291.66	30 459 785.85	27 356 263.00	2 504 071.00	131 735 411.51
2019	80 728 270.45	33 755 332.72	20 843 726.00	1 510 040.88	136 837 370.05
2020	79 172 352.10	23 001 378.12	14 254 929.00	1 805 425.00	118 234 084.22
2014-2020	505 246 736.58	179 673 996.87	193 624 142.32	19 983 149.42	898 528 025.19
Share per axis	56 %	20 %	22 %	2 %	100 %

Source: DG EMPL.

The summary below presents the key achievements in 2019-2020 grouped by specific objectives of each axis.

1. PROGRESS AXIS

The Progress axis has supported actions in three thematic sections. Over the whole period of the programme, the thematic section of social protection received the largest share of funding (50 %), with the thematic section of employment accounting for 28 %. The thematic section of working conditions received the smallest share of funding per axis (10 %). The shares of funding for the three thematic sections under the Progress axis exceeded the minimum shares of financial commitments foreseen in the EaSI legal basis (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Annual and overall shares of funding per thematic section of the Progress axis²

Source: DG EMPL.

1.1. Evidence-based EU policies and legislation

Evidence generated by EaSI contributed to the key EU policy objectives and initiatives. Much of EaSI-funded evidence fed directly into the key EU policy processes such as the European Semester, including its Annual Growth Survey, country-specific recommendations, employment guidelines and joint employment reports. The evidence generated by the programme also contributed to many other policy initiatives in employment and social affairs, for instance: the EU Council's recommendations on the integration of long-term unemployed into the labour market (LTU), Youth Guarantee, Youth Employment Initiative, European Skills Agenda, the Quality Framework for Traineeships, and the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships, social and labour market integration of migrants and refugees, the European Disability Strategy, Active Inclusion strategy, Social Investment

² With any remainder allocated to one or more of the thematic sections referred to above or to a combination of them (cross-cutting issues).

Framework and the European Pillar of Social Rights (work-life balance, long-term care, as well as minimum income).

National, regional and local policymakers as well as other stakeholders considered EaSI-supported evidence as sound and highly useful for policymaking and advocacy purposes. The share of stakeholders who regarded the EU employment and social policy and legislation as strongly evidence based has grown by 9 % in comparison with the previous year (83 % in 2021, 74 % in 2019). Stakeholders involved in the policy area of employment account for the biggest share of stakeholders (87 %). who thought the EU policy was grounded in strong evidence.

EaSI support for the development and dissemination of high-quality comparative analytical knowledge was deemed highly useful for policymaking and advocacy purposes by national, regional and local policymakers as well as other relevant stakeholders. Of respondents to the EaSI stakeholders' survey, 83 % agree that employment and social policy, and legislation are based on strong evidence. This is considerably more than in 2019 (74 %) and 2017 (78 %). Of stakeholders involved in the thematic section of employment, 87 % considered that the EU policy was grounded in strong evidence.

1.2. Effective and inclusive information sharing, mutual learning and dialogue

In 2019-2020, the EaSI Programme remained strong in facilitating effective and inclusive information sharing, mutual learning, and dialogue on the EU policies in the target fields. A significant share of EaSI funding in 2019-2020 under all thematic sections was devoted to peer reviews and mutual learning. The platforms provided by the EaSI Programme were highly useful for sharing knowledge and stimulating dialogue in relevant policy fields. Overall, 76 % of respondents to the EaSI stakeholders' survey declared that they have already used or intend to use information acquired during EaSI-funded events for policymaking or advocacy purposes (86 % in 2017-2018; 85 % in 2015-2016; 89 % in 2014).

Opinion on the involvement of relevant policy and decision-makers in the debate on EU employment and social policy and legislation remained positive among stakeholders. In total, 82 % of respondents to the EaSI stakeholders' survey believe that the debate on EU employment and social policy and legislation included relevant EU and national policy and decision-makers in 2019-2020. This is an increase compared to previous years (80 % in 2019). Respondents to the survey of participants in EaSI-funded events were also slightly more positive than in previous years: 82 % of them said that the EaSI-supported events, in which they participated, involved relevant EU and national policy and decision-makers (81 % in 2017-2019; 85 % in 2015-2016; 91 % in 2014).

1.3. Testing of social and labour market policy innovation

EaSI provided financial support to test social and labour market policy innovations and contributed to building up the main actors' capacity to design and implement social policy experimentations and to make the relevant knowledge and expertise available. The goal of the EaSI Programme to support social policy innovations remained highly visible. A large number (73 %) of respondents to the EaSI stakeholders' survey agree that the Commission is an effective source of guidance and support for social and labour innovation. Furthermore, the share of stakeholders responding to the survey who personally used or intend to use EU-funded social policy innovation also remained high at 62 % (64 % in 2019; 42 % in 2017; 62 % in 2014).

1.4. Greater capacities of national and EU-wide organisations to develop, promote and support the implementation of EU policies

In 2019-2020 EaSI-funded events remained valuable for knowledge and capacity building purposes. In 2019-2020, 88 % of respondents to the stakeholders' survey reported that their participation in a specific EaSI-funded event improved their competence to further develop, promote and support the implementation of EU

employment and social policy and legislation (88 % in 2017-2018; 84 % in 2015-2016; 88 % in 2014).

In 2019-2020, EaSI funded the operating costs of 23 key EU-level NGO networks active in the area of employment and social affairs. However, the appreciation of key EU-level NGOs has decreased. The share of respondents to the EaSI stakeholders' survey acknowledging the key EU-level NGO networks as a useful source of information on EU employment and social policy was 61 % (68 % in 2019; 70 % in 2017; 68 % in 2015). The observed decrease might be explained by looking more closely at the distribution of responses by category of respondents. Twenty-nine per cent (29 %) of all the respondents indicated that they did not know whether key EU-level NGO networks were a useful source of information; most of these respondents were employees of public or private employment services or officials of national, regional or local government institutions. Throughout the years it has been observed that employees of public or private employment services or officials of national, regional or local governments are less familiar with the work of EU-level NGOs.

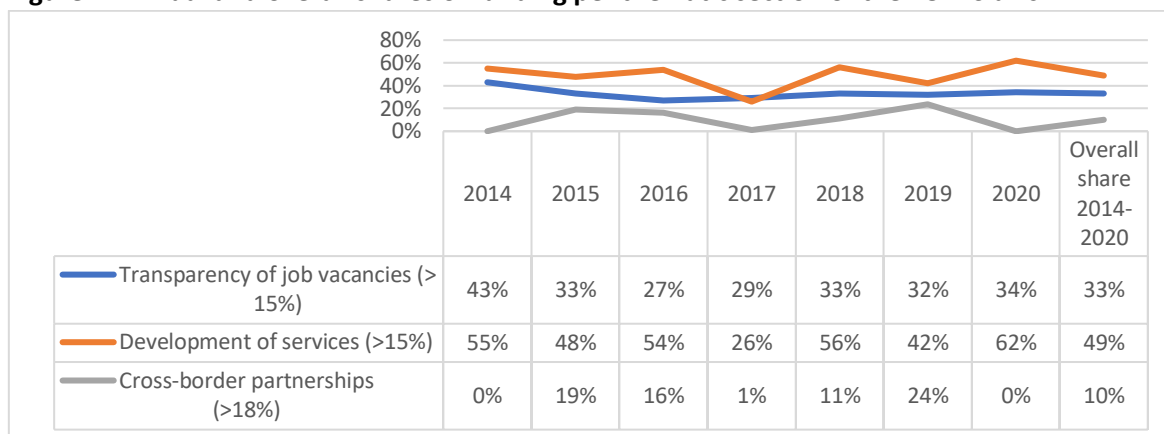
The EaSI-funded events continued to provide a better understanding of EU policies to their participants. Most of the respondents to the survey of participants in EaSI-funded events (91 %) declared that they had gained a better understanding of EU policies and objectives as a result of participating in an EaSI event (91 % in 2017-2018; 87 % in 2015-2016; 91 % in 2014).

The sense of collaboration between the national governments and EU officials remained high and stable. Around 90 % of respondents to the EaSI stakeholders' survey working at national, regional or local government institutions declared that they felt a sense of collaboration between their organisation and the EU institutions (89 % in 2019; 88 % in 2017; 86 % in 2015). The percentage is high for all groups of stakeholders. In total, 81 % feel a sense of collaboration between their organisation and the EU institutions.

2. EURES AXIS

The EURES axis has supported actions in three thematic sections. Over the whole period of the EaSI Programme, the development of services for the recruitment and placing of workers in employment through the clearance of job vacancies and applications at the Union level received the largest share of funding (49 %), while activities to induce transparency of job vacancies and applications accounted for 33 %. The smallest share of funding was dedicated to cross-border mobility (10 %).

The committed funding for activities related to transparency of job vacancies and the development of services exceeded the minimum shares set in the EaSI legal basis while commitments made for cross-border partnerships were below the set target (Figure 2). The minimum target (>18) was not reached, and this was mainly because of the quantity and quality of applications received. The intra-mobility report explaining the mobility flows of cross-border workers revealed that cross-border commuting is more frequent between Member States such as Denmark, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Czechia while it is less frequent between newer Member States. Therefore, there was less demand and equally fewer proposals submitted.

Figure 2. Annual and overall shares of funding per thematic section of the EURES axis³

Source: DG EMPL.

2.1. Transparent labour market information

In 2019-2020, the EaSI Programme aimed to ensure that job vacancies, applications and corresponding information and advice, as well as any related information such as living and working conditions, are made transparent for jobseekers and employers. In this area, EaSI has funded the following key actions:

- A multilingual digital EURES Job Mobility Platform for the clearance of job vacancies and applications;
- Information and communication activities to raise awareness of the benefits of geographical and occupational mobility in general and of the activities and services provided by EURES;
- Mutual learning among EURES actors and training of EURES advisers, including EURES cross-border partnerships advisers.

The use of the EURES Job Mobility Portal was rather uneven from one year to another. According to the latest data available, the EURES Job Mobility Portal attracted around 430 000 monthly users in 2019 and more than 420 000 monthly users in 2020, signifying a 16 % decrease when compared to the combined monthly users in 2017 and 2018. The decline in 2019 might be explained by decreasing unemployment and a general tendency to stabilise mobility flows, while the decrease in 2020 might be due to the pandemic that resulted in temporary border closures hindering the mobility of workers.

The number of registered jobseekers increased substantially. In 2020, there were 1 189 798 CVs available on the EURES portal. This is a significant increase of 110.2 % since 2019. At the same time, the number of registered employers increased by only 3 %. In 2020 for every registered employer there were on average 76 registered jobseekers. Until 2019, not many Member States were completely familiar with the provisions of the EURES Regulation related to the exchange of CVs and Job Vacancies. It was only at the end of 2019 that Member States start transferring CVs to the EURES portal, which explains the substantial increase of jobseekers registered on the EURES portal.

2.2. Effective provision of services for recruitment and placing of workers

In 2019-2020, EaSI continued to support the provision of EURES services for recruitment and placing of workers in quality and sustainable employment through the clearance of job vacancies and applications. In 2019-2020, a newly

³ With any remainder allocated to one or more of the thematic sections referred to above or to a combination of them (cross-cutting issues).

established EURES Performance Measurement System was set to provide a common conceptual and procedural framework to monitor and evaluate the functioning of the EURES network.

Altogether, 3 510 851 personal contacts were made in 2019, of which 3 332 622 contacts were with jobseekers, and 178 229 with employers. In 2020, the contacts made with jobseekers and employers decreased when compared to 2019. In 2020, a total of 3 510 851 contacts were made out of which 2 472 625 with jobseekers and 154 572 – with employers.

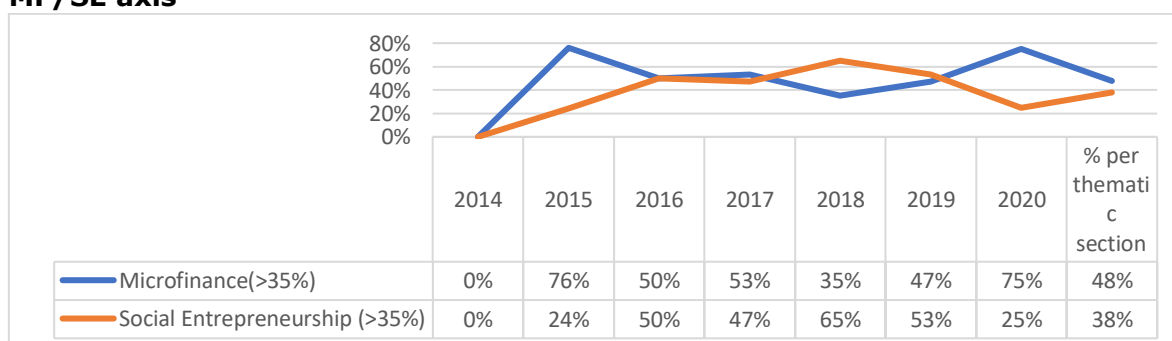
EURES acted not only as a catalyst for providing transparent labour market information but also for effective recruitment and placing of workers. In this regard, the EaSI Programme has supported three targeted mobility schemes which were intended to provide tailored services to mobile workers in the period July 2018 to June 2020. The schemes have provided mobile workers with relocation allowances, job interview travel expense, language courses / training and facilitated recognition of qualifications. In addition, targeted mobility schemes resulted in a total of 13 977 registered jobseekers and 3 551 registered employers, facilitating 29.1 % of contacts into placements.

In 2019, 11 cross-border partnerships (CBPs) were supported through an EaSI grant. During 2019, eight CBPs were selected to receive support for 2020 and 2021. In total, EURES cross-border partnerships reported 195 060 contacts with jobseekers and job changers in 2019, facilitating 2.8 % of contacts into placements. Examples of successful services provided to jobseekers and employers via cross-border partnerships are made available in the reports on EaSI-supported projects and organisations.

3. MICROFINANCE AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AXIS

The Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis supported actions in two thematic sections. Over the period of the EaSI Programme, the thematic section of Microfinance received 48 % of funding while the activities under the thematic section of Social Entrepreneurship accounted for 38 %. The shares of funding committed for both Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship thematic sections exceeded the minimum shares of financial commitments foreseen in the EaSI legal basis (>35 %).

Figure 3. Annual and overall shares of funding per thematic section of the MF/SE axis⁴



Source: DG EMPL.

3.1. Better access to, and availability of, microfinance

EaSI continued providing a real added value to better access and availability of microfinance. The objectives of the Microfinance thematic section were achieved by supporting microcredit providers through financial instruments. These included guarantees and counter-guarantees offered by the European Investment Fund (EIF) to

⁴ With any remainder allocated to one or more of the thematic sections referred to above or to a combination of them (cross-cutting issues).

financial intermediaries, thereby providing them with partial credit risk protection for newly originated loans to eligible final recipients. In 2019-2020, 34 new guarantee agreements worth more than EUR 74 million were signed with microfinance intermediaries.

Over the period of the programme, a total of 97 271 microloans worth EUR 1.27 billion were issued. With guarantees worth a total of EUR 241 million signed from 2014 to 2020, the actual leverage effect achieved was 5.3⁵. Micro-enterprises operating in the area of wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (27 % in 2019; 26 % in 2020) received most of the funding.

3.2. Better access to finance for social enterprises

EaSI's support for overall availability and access to finance for social enterprises increased significantly. This was done by providing financial support to investors in social enterprises through various financial instruments, which included guarantees, debt instruments and equity / quasi-equity instruments. In 2020, eight contracts were signed with financial intermediaries in the area of social entrepreneurship. More than EUR 50 million were used to guarantee the funding provided by these intermediaries to social enterprises.

From 2014 to 2020 a total of 3 337 social enterprises received funding from the EaSI Programme through the thematic section of Social Entrepreneurship. The total amount of funding provided to social enterprises amounted to more than EUR 490 million, with an average of EUR 147 135 per social enterprise. Most of the funding throughout 2019 and 2020 went to social enterprises operating in the area of human health and social work activities (16 % in 2019 and 18 % in 2020).

3.3. Stronger institutional capacity of microcredit providers

EaSI focused on supporting the improvement of microcredit providers' infrastructure to better assist the final recipients. Launched in December 2016, the EaSI Capacity Building Investment Window continued to provide funding to financial institutions, both in the microfinance and in the social entrepreneurship space mainly through quasi-equity investments. The ultimate objective of this instrument was to build up the institutional capacity of selected intermediaries to sustain their growth and development. Up to the end of 2020, 14 capacity building contracts had been signed, covering 9 countries, for a total committed amount of EUR 30.2 million, with EUR 21.4 million committed to microfinance and EUR 8.8 million to social entrepreneurship.

EaSI focused on supporting persons who are in a disadvantaged position to access the conventional credit market, such as women, the unemployed, those with no or only primary education, young and older people. A significant increase in support for persons from non-EU countries can be observed (from 11.9 % in 2018 to 22.1 % in 2020). A slight but steady increase in the category of people aged 51 years and above is also observed (from 19.5 % in 2018 to 22.4 % in 2020)⁶. In contrast, support for women, those unemployed or inactive, and persons aged less than 25 years is decreasing, while people with disability received a somewhat equal amount of financing from 2018 to 2020. A decrease in support for certain categories of jobseekers has been observed as the conditions in the labour market continued to improve all over Europe (in 2018-2019) while unemployment and the number of jobseekers is decreasing.

⁵ Please note that the leverage effect describes the effect of debt on the return on equity. The higher the leverage, the bigger the return on initial investment is.

⁶ A large number of recipients for the EU microfinance and social entrepreneurship support under the EaSI Programme are legal persons (enterprises). As these do not provide their social data (e.g., gender, age, employment), there are limitations to assessing the outreach of the EU microfinance and social entrepreneurship support to specific groups, including vulnerable persons. The observations are based on the data provided by natural persons only, which provides an incomplete picture but suggests the distributional support trends. An additional limitation derives from the fact that data are provided voluntarily by financial intermediaries and therefore they could not be representative of the real support to these target groups.

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